

Message Text

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46

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OMB-01 CU-02 PC-01 IO-13 DHA-02 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /076 W

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R 201243Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7847

AMCONSSW BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 12263

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, IN

SUBJ: INDIAN PRESS PROBLEMS WITH GOI

REF: NEW DELHI 12092

1. DISTRIBUTION OF INDIAN EXPRESS CONTINUES TO LAG BEHIND IN DELHI BY UP TO 24 HOURS AS ENTIRE PAPER IS SUBJECT TO DAILY LINE-BY-LINE CENSORSHIP. PUBLICATION I OTHER CITIES VARIES WITH SPEED OF CENSORS; AUGUST 20 BOMBAY EDITION WAS CANCELLED COMPLETELY AS RESULT OF CENSOR'S DELAYS.

2. WE HAVE SEEN COPIES OF JULY 25 CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN MANAGING DIRECTOR R.N. GOENKA AND PM'S SECRETARY, PROF. P.N. DHAR, IN WHICH GOENKA CHARGED HE WAS THREATENED WITH JAIL UNDER MISA BY MININFO SHUKLA IF HE DID NOT FALL IN WITH GOI PLANS FOR THE PAPER, WHICH INCLUDED GIVING TOTAL EDITORIAL AND PERSONNEL CONTROL TO BOARD CHAIRMAN K.K. BIRLA, WHICH GOENKA HAS STEADFASTLY REFUSED TO DO.

3. EXPRESS IN DELHI HAS CUT BACK FROM 10 TO 8 PAGES
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AND APPEARS TO HAVE LOST CONSIDERABLE ADVERTISING

SPACE (AS COMPARED WITH PREVIOUS WEEK), BUT KEY FILM ADS AND SOME GOVT ADS CONTINUE TO APPEAR.

4. GOI CHIEF CENSOR (AND EXPRESS NEWS EDITOR KULDIP NAYAR) BOTH TELL US THAT J.B. KRIPALANI LETTER WAS NOT REASON FOR IMPOSITION OF PRECENSORSHIP (REFTEL) BUT THAT IT WAS ACCUMULATION OF SMALL ISSUES (ACCORDING TO CENSOR) PLUS GOVT DECISION TO BRING GOENKA TO HIS KNEES (NAYAR).

5. THE VERNACULAR PAPERS OF THE EXPRESS GROUP (WHICH EMBRACE NEARLY HALF OF TP TOTAL CIRCULATION OF THE GROUP-- TOTALLING NEARLY ONE MILLION) HAVE NOT THUS FAR BEEN TOUCHED BY CENSORSHIP ORDER.

6. THE STATESMAN, WHICH HAS BEEN FIGHTING A GOVT ORDER THREATENING TAKE-OVER OF THE PAPER'S DELHI PRINTING PRESS (NEW DELHI 11071) MAY HAVE WON A VICTORY, SINCE AT A COURT HEARING AUG 20, GOVT ATTORNEYS INDICATED THEY MIGHT WITHDRAW. STATESMAN EDITOR S. NIHAL SINGH TELLS US THE NEWSPAPER'S CASE WAS IMPECCABLE AND IT WOULD HAVE BEEN VERY DIFFICULT FOR THE GOVT TO WIN IN ANY COURT SHOWDOWN. THIS, OF COURSE, IS ONLY ONE OF THE MANY CASES CURRENTLY FACING THE STATESMAN.
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Margaret P. Grafeld
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